lime pointing of Manlius when charged with sedition to the capitol he had saved. How the spirit of the past rebukes the chafings of the present! When we think of the mighty surge of danger which, with brave brother breasts, our forefathers confronted then, how next to nothing seem the interposed rivulets that would make us enemies now!

But we must hasten to the orator's conclusion, as we find that it is the only way to get to a conclusion of our own. Every one knows that the winding up of a speech is a perilous thing—*facilis descensus*, is not true, in one sense at least, in oratory. Mr. McDowell escapes the danger of a fall, by not coming down at all. According to those fanciful stanzas by Longfellow, after height upon height has been gained, and at last all is over, a sound falls down from somewhere supernal, bodying the world "Excelsior." This is the aptest allusion which occurs to us to illustrate the Governor's finale. What is a little singular, he selects for this hour of need, a steed that he had ridden before—a gallant one it is true, and able to do double work, if ever there was one. He re-delivers verbatim the conclusion of his celebrated Princeton Address. Of course it was familiar to every one in the House, for it had gone through the length and breadth of the land, and we have seen it besides fitted into other settings, and it was not a thing to be forgotten. We can hardly say whether we like it or not. It was just the thing that was needed here, and perhaps no other man in the Union could furnish any thing else as good. Perhaps Mr. McDowell himself could not, and therefore he has used it, as he had a perfect right to do, seeing it is no felony to steal from one's self. Still it looks like literary adultery, to have the same peroration married to two living speeches. At all events, to change the figure, we are sure that as the conclusion to the Princeton Address it will ever hereafter have to us the rather unpleasant look of something born out of due time.

One word as to the mere style. We have heard some persons say that they were very much struck with the brilliancy of the illustrations and the allusions; we cannot say that we were particularly. It has been our good fortune often to hear the Governor in easy conversation, for hours together, throw off extemporaneously, bright, apposite things of this sort, fully as good as the best in the speech, and a good deal better than the "open sesame" one and some others. Let us be understood to put in a saving clause in favor of the West Augusta conclusion. We take off our cap to this and hold it to be among illustrations what the Ode on St. Cecilia's Day is among lyrics. As to the language, who does not praise it? Still we would be no true critic did we allow it to be perfect, and we would be much better critic than we aspire to be, could we point out wherein it could be amended. It is pure, elegant and classic, but with a slight tendency to expletiveness—it is exact without pedantry, and picturesque without mannerism—nevertheless, had it a trifle more about it of the rough Anglo-Saxon jar, it would please our ear better—but, nevertheless again, we would not advise Gov. McDowell to attempt anychange in the language, unless he can get better authority than ours, that it would be an improvement.

We have confined our notice of this speech to its character as a specimen of eloquence. What may be its political influence, we pretend not to estimate. The bill it advocated did not pass, (we wish the vote had been taken as soon as it was finished.) But what then? Men may vote one way and think another, and the secret conviction of this year may turn into the vote of the next. An old writer has said of affliction, as connected with the reception of religious truth, "when the ground is soft the plough will enter." So let us think of the truth conveyed in this speech. There were many hearts softened in the Hall of our National Legislature. May we not hope that, in that sacred hour, impressions were made whose hallowed tendencies will be to remove suspicion, to lessen jealousies, to restrain strife, and to heal the hurt of our country by melting the hearts of her sons into a blessed brotherhood?

S. L. C.

THE ISTHMUS LINE TO THE PACIFIC.

Before presenting to our readers the following letter of Lieut. Maury on the subject of a line of improvement across the Isthmus to the Pacific, we have a word to say with regard to the Convention proposed to be held at Memphis on the fourth day of July next. The objects which this Convention has in view, are briefly set forth in a circular letter of invitation, addressed to us by a committee of gentlemen at Memphis. We transfer it to our pages.

Memphis, Tenn., March 1st, 1849.

Sir: The attention of the people of the Union has recently been directed to the consideration of the expediency of constructing a RAIL ROAD from the valley of the Mississippi to California, for the double object of rendering still more valuable our vast possessions on the Pacific, and placing within our grasp the commerce with Asia;—a dazzling prize with maritime nations for more than twenty centuries.

St. Louis, in Missouri, and other points still further north, have been designated as most suitable for the commencement of the proposed work. The citizens of Arkansas, at a recent public meeting, at their Capital, in which the leading men of

the State participated, considering the national character of the work, with entire unanimity suggested the point opposite Memphis as being most nearly central to the whole Union; below most of the great tributaries of the Mississippi; below the frost bound regions of the North, and in a direct line of connection with another grand scheme of improvement,—the Atlantic and Mississippi Rail Road; and with the view of eliciting an expression of public sentiment on the subject, they have recommended that a convention be held at Memphis, on the fourth day of July next.

Our citizens, in public meeting, have promptly and cordially seconded the movement made in Arkansas; and, in pursuance of the objects of that meeting, the undersigned have been appointed a committee of correspondence.

In the discharge of our duty, we invoke your aid and influence in directing public sentiment towards the great design; and invite you to be present at the proposed convention.

We are respectfully,

J. T. TREZEVANT,	A. B. WARFORD,
DAVID LOONEY,	R. TOPP,
M. B. WINCHESTER,	H. VAN PELT,
R. C. BRINKLEY,	S. WHEATLEY,
JOHN POPE,	R. J. YANCEY,
R. B. J. TWYMAN,	JAMES PENN.

John R. Thompson, Esq.

We shall look with great interest to the result of the deliberations of this Convention, fully persuaded, as we are, that Memphis is in all respects the most desirable spot for the eastern terminus of the great American railway to California. That this railway will be constructed speedily we consider as a foregone conclusion. And in this view of the matter we desire most respectfully to make a suggestion to the Convention itself.

In Lieut. Maury's letter to the Hon. T. Butler King, published in this magazine in April, 1848, the striking fact was stated for the first time, that a straight line let fall on a common terrestrial globe from Panama to Changhai in China, so far from passing directly across the Pacific, would pass through the Gulf of Mexico and the State of Louisiana towards Oregon and cross the ocean many thousand miles to the north of the Sandwich Islands. This fact, so easy of ascertainment to all and yet so little known until stated by Lieut. Maury, excited great surprise everywhere. Recurring to this great *Commercial Circle*, Lieut. Maury now shows that when the line from Memphis to California and the improvement of the Isthmus shall have been completed, the United States will be in the direct route of travel from the South American States on the Pacific to China. We respectfully suggest therefore to the Memphis Convention some prompt action on the connection across the Isthmus, with a view to securing the travel across the American continent, making it indeed the *Highway of nations*. This object is of course subordinate in point of time to the great railway across the country to our California possessions, but as the design of the Convention is rather to fix the terminus of a road already resolved on, than to consider upon the propriety of the road itself, we should be pleased to see it take steps towards the construction of the Isthmus line as a work of the highest importance and as calculated in an eminent degree, to augment the usefulness of the Continental scheme.—[*Ed. Mess.*

WASHINGTON, Feb. 7th, 1849.

Sir,—Your letter of the 5th inst. has been received. You ask my opinion as to the comparative advantages of a rail road across Tehuantepec and Darien to the Pacific, and desire my views as to the effect of such a communication upon commerce and navigation.

Whatever of information this office affords concerning the great interests of Navigation is at the public service.

Your letter opens before me the whole subject of a communication with the Pacific. It is a most important one, and as wide as important. Though my time is very fully occupied with other duties of the office, I should be glad to devote several days exclusively to the subject. But you call for a speedy reply. Therefore I must content myself with giving such information only as I happen to have at hand. I could wish it were better worth the having.

An impression has been made upon the public mind that the depth of water on the bar across the mouth of the Coatzacoalcos river, which empties from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec into the Gulf of Mexico, is 20 feet or more. Two charts have been published recently by this office of the mouth and bar of that river from surveys made by order of Commodore Perry in 1847 and 1848. These surveys agree in giving it a depth of not more than 12½ feet.

With regard to the draft of water here, Commodore Perry writes me under date of January 25th, 1849—"I have crossed the bar several times myself sounding both ways, and have had three several surveys made, and the average depth in the channel has *not exceeded* 12½ *feet*."

This bar is open to the north; and of course the *northers*, which are so terrible in the Gulf, have their full sweep at it. The swell which they raise, assumes, when it arrives off the bar, the shape of rollers, which break across it in such a manner as to render it impracticable for any vessel, however light her draft, to go in or to come out.

During the season of the northers, the approaches to the mouth of the Coatzacoalcos and all that part of the Mexican coast are very dangerous, for if a vessel be caught there, you will see by examining the coast line which is in the shape of a horse shoe opening to the north, that they would have a lee shore, and be embayed without any harbor or port of refuge to which they could flee for shelter. From these causes alone, independent of the difficulties on the Pacific side, the communication between the sea and a rail road or canal across Tehuantepec would be attended with difficulty and danger. It would moreover be liable to frequent and annoying interruptions

from time to time during four or five months of the year when the northers prevail.

These winds sometimes blow a week or more without ceasing, during which time the waves of the sea are so heavy as to make it impossible for any vessel to cross the bar. The Mississippi steamer, during the Mexican war was caught off that coast in a norther. She was at anchor on the outside, and yet the sea ran so high as to cause material damage to that leviathan of a ship. The tops of her wheel-houses are some 25 or 30 feet above the water line, yet such was the force of the waves that they swept away from the tops of them her boats which had been stowed up there for safety. The ship herself was also damaged.

On the Pacific side, this Isthmus is washed by what is called the Gulf of Tehuantepec. The shores of this Gulf embrace a coast line of some 300 miles in extent; about 250 miles of which, including the proposed Pacific terminus of the communication across, resembles in its geological features the coast line of our Southern Atlantic States. Like them it has a chain of long narrow islands or promontories, now joining the main land and again separating from it by sounds or sheets of water as Pamlico, Albemarle and the like. There are frequent inlets between the links in this chain, but all of them have the word "Bar" as a prefix or affix to their names.

The "Boca Barra," literally "the mouth Bar," connects the lagoons into which the Chicapa empties with the Pacific, and this is the proposed terminus, on that side, for the Tehuantepec route.

I have now before me a chart of the west coast of Central America, published by the English Admiralty with corrections up to 1843. By this it appears that from a point nearly opposite to the city of Guatamala to another near that of Tehuantepec, say 250 miles, there are twenty-odd inlets and breaks in this chain of islands, and there is only one among them whose name on the map is without the word "Bar" attached to it.

There are also on this chart the surveys of nine ports or roadsteads in and about the Gulf of Tehuantepec from the surveys of Captain Sir Edward Belcher, R. N., in 1838, and others. That officer surveyed the open roadstead of Ventosa within 20 miles of Boca Barra, and other places in the vicinity, but I cannot find that the Boca Barra is by him, or on any chart, or by any other nautical work of authority among navigators, once mentioned or alluded to in any manner whatever as a place into which vessels may enter. I have consulted all the English and French Admiralty charts on the subject, and from all I can learn I am forced to the conclusion that the depth of water at the Boca Barra does *not exceed* six or eight feet, if there be that much.

One of the first steps therefore in the opening of a way across this Isthmus for passing the commerce from one ocean to another would be the construction of a harbor on each side. The difficulties in the way of this I consider insurmountable unless with the expenditure of immense sums.

The Delaware breakwater, though constructed when a sailor would say, "the water is as smooth as a mill-pond," and where there are none of those ocean waves and heavy rollers that came from the sea to interrupt the work, cost an immense sum. But such a work as the Delaware Breakwater, as stout as it is, is not at all calculated to withstand the heavy seas that come across the broad Pacific ocean gathering magnitude and strength as they come.

In order rightly to appreciate the practical difficulties of making harbors on the sea coast where nature has refused to form them, or has shut them up, consider the difficulties of forming harbors on the northern lakes where there are none; consider how the commerce of North Carolina has been broken up by the closing of the inlets on that coast. Sir Francis Drake, you recollect, passed with his fleet into Roanoke Inlet, which has barely water enough now to float a skiff. Plans have been proposed for reopening it; but the attempt has yet to be made. The Eddy Stone light house is a work exposed to the full force of the sea; that work, though its cost was so enormous, is held up by all nations as one of the greatest monuments that the world affords as to the powers and skill of the engineer over the waves of the sea—and yet that work is a work of pigmies in comparison with what is required to open a harbor in the Gulf of Tehuantepec.

Eddy Stone is built on a rock—Tehuantepec rests on the sand.

Numerous streams empty into the Gulf of Tehuantepec, and as is the case on our Atlantic coast wherever such streams empty directly into the ocean, bars, sand spits and islands are the consequence. The sediment that is brought down the Mississippi, the Roanoke, &c., is met at the mouth by an opposing current from the tide and swell of the sea. Here it is arrested in its course and held in still water for a moment, when the process of deposition immediately commences. It is this deposition which, in the course of time, forms these bars, &c. The indications are conclusive, that the same geological or drift agencies which formed the chain of islands along the coast of Carolina and Georgia are now at work in the Gulf of Tehuantepec.*

* See a valuable paper on the subject of drift, formation of shoals and the like by Lieut. Chas. Davis, U. S. N., read before the society of the American Association. Philadelphia, 1848.

These in my mind are the principal of the physical difficulties in the way of a communication across Tehuantepec—and until some practical plan be suggested for removing or overcoming them, it is useless to look further, for there is no doubt that with *money enough* the continent may be cut in twain here both by Rail Road and Ship Canal.

But the great difficulty does not consist in cutting the continent in two: it consists in gaining access from the sea to and from the high-way across. At Darien there is safe anchorage with sufficient water on both sides. On this side we have "Navy Bay," or by the old Spanish name, the Bay for 74s; also Puerto Bello, or the "beautiful harbor." On the other, there is the safe roadstead of Panama. The distance across in a direct line from the head of Navy, or "Limon Bay" to Panama is rather less than 45 miles, which is about one-third the distance across Tehuantepec. The distance there in a direct line from sea to sea being 139 miles.

From New York and the Atlantic ports, Navy Bay is a little further in point of distance—say 100 miles—than the mouth of the Coatzacoalcos, and it is proportionably further in time also.

But suppose, for the sake of running out the parallel, that the harbors of Tehuantepec were as good as those of Darien; that we had the right of way across Tehuantepec as well as Darien; and that it were left to the government and people of the United States to select either one of the two routes for a commercial highway, which one of the two would be most conducive of the general interests—taking general interest to mean the welfare of the whole country?

This is the point which I now prefer to consider. But in the consideration and discussion of it, I wish it to be borne in mind that I do not for a moment lose sight of a rail road through our own country, from the Mississippi valley to the Pacific ocean. This is a work which the public will have sooner or later, and any other route across the country I hold subordinate to this. Therefore, in running the parallel between Tehuantepec and Darien, I shall take it for granted that the Mississippi and California rail road will be in process of construction at no very distant day. It must be built. I take it therefore as a postulate.

Bearing this postulate and these facts in mind, the question may be asked, what, since we are to have a rail road through our own country, do we want with a portage across the neck of land between the Oceans? *Ans.*—We want it for the transportation of those articles of merchandise which cannot pay freight over a rail road 1500 miles long, but which would find it cheaper to pay the portage across the Isthmus than to incur the freight and time of a passage around Cape Horn. This merchandise would consist of the products of the whale fishery in the Pacific, which in bone and oil, amount to five millions and a half of dollars per annum. It would consist of cotton and woolen goods and the coarser manufactures of all descriptions for which the merchant can find markets in any of the ports of Pacific America. It would consist also of butter and cheese, rice, bread, and such like perishable articles for the Pacific squadron, that I have seen condemned and thrown into the sea at Callao and Valparaiso, by the ship load, owing to the damages incurred in the long and boisterous voyage around Cape Horn. These are some of the principal articles only, for if I were to go into details I might make out a list of them as long as the manifest on board some of the ships for California, which we are told are many fathoms long.

Navy Bay and Coatzacoalcos are about the same distance in point of time from the Atlantic States. But to the Gulf States, to California and Oregon, Tehuantepec is much nearer. This fact, if it were the only one upon which the choice of routes hinges, would be decisive. But unfortunately Tehuantepec affords no harbors and no right of way; and if it did, there are other points upon which a right decision of the question would turn.

Communication is wanted, I apprehend, to other markets besides those of California. There are the South American Republics which border on the Pacific with their eight millions of people, all of whom want things that we have to sell. Panama is to them nearer by many days sail under canvass than Tehuantepec.

A sailing vessel from New Orleans might deliver her cargo at Navy Bay and return with another before one could be sent under canvass via. Tehuantepec to Panama, so uncertain are the winds in the Pacific side between Tehuantepec and Panama.

Panama is so nearly in a straight line from the coasts of Chili, Peru and Ecuador to New Orleans that the detour is not more than 100 miles.

The freight across the Tehuantepec road would be nearly treble, for the distance across is three times as great as it is over that of Panama.

Five cents per ton per mile is about the average charge for freight over the rail roads in the United States; competition has brought it down perhaps within this estimate. But I suppose neither a rail road across Tehuantepec or Darien could afford transportation at any such rates. Perhaps ten cents would be nearer than five to the mark; let us therefore take ten cents per ton per mile as the average rate of freight to be ex-

acted of the merchandise over these two routes. The Tehuantepec road, supposing both to be run on a strait line, is 95 miles the longer, and a ton of American merchandise to pass this road would have to pay $9 50 per ton more than the Panama road would exact of it. A tax of $9 50 per ton upon American commerce for ever for the mere advantage of shortening temporarily the time for passengers bound hence to California, for one week, would, it appears to me, be paying too dearly for a little time. For when the rail road is built across from the Mississippi, no one from South America bound to California will think of going by the way of Tehuantepec. A tribute forever to Mexico of $9 50 per ton on commerce, the extent of which cannot be foreseen, for the privilege of saving seven days for seven years or there away in the time to and from California! Why, sir, this is a tax far more onerous and odious than the famous Chinese "Cumshaw" which had from time immemorial been exacted of all "Barbarian" ships, and the abrogation of which was hailed with so much delight on both sides of the Atlantic. Its abrogation is a prominent article of the China treaties both with the States of Europe and America; and it, with the free ports, is considered as the chief good which has resulted from the wicked war of England upon China.

At this rate of 10 cents, a ship carrying 1,000 tons of merchandise would have to pay $9,500 more to get her cargo across Tehuantepec than she would to get it across Panama. Few indeed are the cargoes that can pay such a "Cumshaw" as this.

The charge at 10 cents the ton a mile would be, via. Panama, 44 miles—$4 40; via. Tehuantepec, 139 miles—$13 90—difference $9,500. The site of Panama is quite as convenient to the market ways over the Pacific as Tehuantepec. But little is due therefore to any advantages, to be gained by the one over the other on account of a more central terminus on the Pacific side.

Let us now see whether such merchandise as is usually sent around Cape Horn to the South American markets, could afford to pay the expense of portage over either of these two routes across the continent.

The space allotted on board ship to a ton of merchandise is 40 feet. Estimating the average rate of freight on cotton to Europe at one cent the pound, and 1,350 pounds as occupying the space of a ton, and the average distance across the Atlantic, from the cotton ports at 3,500 sea miles, we have 3.86 mills as the average rate of freight of cotton per ton per sea mile under canvass. But cotton pays the freight both ways, for the ships which take it generally come empty. From this estimate and explanation we get one mill and ninety-eight hundredths of a mill (1.98) as the average rate per ton per sea mile for the transportation of merchandise across the ocean under canvass.

The average distance which a vessel under canvass has to accomplish, from New York to Lima, may be taken in round numbers at 13,000 miles (sea,) which, at 1.98 mill per ton per mile gives as the average rate of freight thence $25 74.

To satisfy you as to the degree of confidence due this estimate, I may remark that since making it out I have consulted a gentleman who has been engaged for many years in the Lima trade. He informs me that until Guano was introduced as an article of commerce, the usual rate of freight from New York to Lima was between $25 and $30 per ton.

Guano pays heavy freight. Vessels that go there are now certain of a return cargo, and the outward rates at present rule at $15 the ton, equal to 1.15 mill per ton, per sea mile.

This rate I adopt for the following comparative estimates as to the cost of the transportation of a ton of merchandise from New York via Cape Horn, Tehuantepec and Panama. The distance to be accomplished under canvass is stated at 4,300 miles via Tehuantepec and 3,700 via Panama.

	Via Cape Horn.	*Tehuantepec.*	*Panama.*
Cost by Sea,	$15 00	4 94	4 25
Rail Road,		13 90*	4 40
Total sea and land,	$15 00	18 84	8 65

Now taking one kind of merchandise with another we may safely assume the average value of it to be $2 50 per ton.

The passage around Cape Horn is three months longer than it is across the Isthmus, and it is therefore proper to charge the Cape Horn route with the interest on $250 for three months, which at six per cent is $3 75—making the whole cost around Cape Horn $18 75 or 9 cents less than by Tehuantepec, and $10 20, *more than one hundred per cent* greater than by Panama. From this statement it appears that we may go and come with our merchandise via Panama with less freight than we can now go, outward bound alone, via Cape Horn.

The average length of a voyage under can-

* $13 90. In consequence of the greater distance across Tehuantepec, a rail road there for obvious reasons could afford to charge a smaller rate of freight per ton per mile, than a shorter road. Suppose 20 per cent less. This would make the freight over the Tehuantepec road to be $11 12, and including the sea voyage $16 06, or nearly double the Panama route. Deduct $2 78 from the Tehuantepec estimates and you will observe that Panama has greatly the advantage as to cost, to every point mentioned in the estimate.

vass from New York to San Francisco is, via Tehuantepec 4,800 miles, via Panama 6,300.

Comparative statements of the freight of a ton of merchandise at 10 cents per ton per rail road, and 1.15 mill per ton under sail.

	Via Tehuantepec.	*Via Panama.*
By Sea	$5 52	$7 25
" Rail Road,	$13 90	$4 40
	$19 42	$11 65

Difference in favor of Panama $7 71.

Statement of the freight by each route from New Orleans to San Francisco, the sailing distance being, via Tehuantepec 3,700 miles and via Panama 5,700.

	Via Tehuantepec.	*Via Panama.*
By Sea,	$4 25	$6 55
" Rail Road,	$13 90	$4 40
	$18 15	$10 95

Difference in favor of Panama $7 20.

With the man of business, time and money are correlative terms, for he counts time as money and reckons money according to time.

These figures are all, except the 10 cents per ton for rail road freight, drawn from actual statistics. But treat them as you will, you must allow nearly three times as much freight for the Tehuantepec as for the Panama route, perhaps in consideration of having to load and unload, at the Isthmus, a larger rate of freight should be charged by sea under canvass than around Cape Horn. But that rate may be trebled and still give the advantage to Panama over either Cape Horn or Tehuantepec.

The freight on goods per ocean steamers is double that by sailing vessels. It is only the more costly articles of merchandise and those of a particular kind that go by steamers. These consist of new styles and patterns of the finest description of dry goods. The steamer U. States has just arrived with such a cargo, it consists of silks, laces and caps, ribbons and bonnets—fibs and furbelows—making up the spring fashions for the whole country.

But sea steamers, like rail roads depend greatly upon passengers for their profits.

Calculating by weight, 7 passengers, with an average allowance for baggage of 150 pounds each may be stated as a ton weight. In the English steamers to New York and Boston, a ton of passengers pays about $1,200, whereas a ton of merchandise pays only about $24. The former require no handling by stevedores, coopers or draymen; no ware-house when they arrive in port for storage, &c. They unload and load themselves.

The experience of the world with regard to ocean steam navigation, both authorizes and justifies the conclusion, that whatever be the revolution which a rail road across the Isthmus would create in the course of trade, as at present conducted, sailing and not steam vessels would continue to fetch and carry the bulk of the merchandise passing across the Isthmus.

There is a line of steamers on the route from Panama to Valparaiso, Law's line from New York, &c., and Aspinwall's from California, connect with this line at the Isthmus of Panama, and the merchandise to be transported by these lines, will be the fashions for the western American markets, and the costly articles corresponding to those which are brought from Europe by the English steamers for the "Modistas" there.

The population of the South American States which border on the Pacific, may be stated in round numbers at 8 millions of people; we have seen the advantages of the Panama route for communicating with them, and how these people, with their markets and their wants, would be brought two or three months nearer to us than they are now. It is difficult rightly to estimate the national advantages of lifting up eight millions of people and setting them down as it were within 30 or 40 days of our markets, instead of having them removed at three or four times that distance, as they heretofore have been. We see the like in our own country, only on a smaller scale, when, by rail roads, canals or other internal improvements, three or four hundred thousand people who before were days off, are brought within a few hours of our commercial marts and great market towns.

The results in such cases have invariably defied calculation—producing changes and benefits to a degree and extent that were neither anticipated or imagined. Under such changes of facilities to markets we have cities springing up as if by enchantment. Then what may we not expect when we move millions instead of thousands with the commercial lever.

The history of the world does not afford strictly a parallel case.

Venice you know was a flourishing city through the trade of caravans with the East. But the passage around the Cape of Good Hope destroyed her prosperity, carried her wealth away and placed it within the gates of other cities. A rail road to Panama, will be to the passage around Cape Horn, what Vasco de Gama's discovery was to the caravans across the deserts of Arabia.

Communication and transportation will be cheaper and more frequent. The Panama link would bring the markets of South America as near to us as those of Europe were before the ocean steamers began to run; and for all the purposes of commerce the Panama rail road would

place our Lake country as near to the South American ports as those of the Mediterranean now are to New York.

By the act passed two or three years ago, and known as Mr. Pratt's bill, merchandise intended for the Canadian markets, is allowed a free duty transit through the United States.

And what has been the effect? To supply nearly all Canada West with imports through New York instead of up the St. Lawrence. The importing of these goods benefits the city of New York, because it brings business there: it benefits the state also and the people, because it gives employment to men and vessels, and pays tolls for the use of wharves, canal, &c., &c.: and bringing goods it brought Canadian merchants to look after them, and who, being in New York, found inducements to buy, that they knew not of. In the language of a New York dealer, "those Canadians buy immensely."

Only two or three hundred thousand people are supplied in this way, yet both the Empire State and the commercial emporium of the United States feel, appreciate and value the effects of it.

What, therefore, shall it be when 8 millions of people are connected with New Orleans and the South by similar ties.

The Peruvian merchants, like the Mexicans coming to New Orleans, will there find offered to them, on suitable terms, all the purchases they desire to make. Like the Canadian in New York, the South American will close his bargains without going any farther. The immediate effect of this new state of things will be to give activity to the New Orleans markets: to cause the European houses in the South American and Mexican trade, to ship in the vessels coming for your cotton, whole cargoes to be deposited in the ware-houses of New Orleans and distributed thence via Panama among the markets of the Pacific.

The warehousing system, under proper regulations, would not fail greatly to promote the amount of commerce from England via New Orleans and the Cotton Ports, across Panama. At the end of three years, from the completion of the Panama rail road, I should expect to see regular lines of sailing packets plying to and fro not only between that Isthmus and the ports of the United States, but also of South America.

Such a course of trade would not fail greatly to benefit the southern planter, for all the goods intended for the eight millions of South Americans would be brought over in the cotton ships, which now come empty and thus the South Americans, &c. would be made to divide with you the freight on all your cotton that goes to Europe.

I therefore urge this Panama rail road, not only as a great national measure, but also as a great southern measure. It is one which will again make Charleston the half-way-house to market, of the advantages of which position she was deprived when Dr. Franklin let down his thermometer into the sea and discovered the Gulf Stream.

If you will stretch a string on a common terrestial globe, from Panama to China, you will find that it passes not far from New Orleans: therefore when *that* rail road to the Pacific shall be built, New Orleans will be the thoroughfare of travel between South America, California and China. It will be several days nearer to California by this route than it will be up the Coast on the Pacific side.

In this view of the subject I regard the Panama route an important link in that system which is to connect the Mississippi Valley with the Pacific Ocean and make the United States the thoroughfare of travel between the East and West Indies, South America and Asia, Europe and China.

The Tehuantepec route would not bring the travel to and from South America through New Orleans or the United States—for a steamer bound from Panama to San Francisco could land her passengers in California sooner than they could get there, even if the Tehuantepec harbors were good, by landing at Boca Barra, crossing the Isthmus, steaming up the Mississippi and taking the rail road thence to the Pacific. After leaving Panama for California, by steamer, it would be nearly two days out of the way to touch at Tehuantepec.

I regard the Panama rail road, therefore, as a most important link to lengthen out and make complete the rail road from the Mississippi valley to the Pacific: it is so nearly on the great circle route, or an air line from Cape Blanco, the western promontory of South America to New Orleans, that the difference, though the length of that line is nearly 4000 miles, does not amount to 100 miles.

The Panama link instead of retarding the road across our own country would hasten it. The prosperity and enterprise given to the country, by the Erie Canal produced the Erie rail road and has served greatly to stimulate the settlement of the Lake States.

It is obvious that a rail road across Panama would also greatly advance the settlement of California; stimulate the enterprise and promote wealth there. And is it in the nature of the people of this country to stop half way? The passage to California when the Panama Rail Road shall be completed, will still be 25 or 30 days with three or four prices. A rail road from the Mississippi

Valley across to California will bring San Francisco within 2 or 3 instead of 25 or 30 days—as across Panama it must be.

To shorten the passage between New York and Boston an hour or two, the Long Island rail road was built alongside of the Long Island Sound at a cost almost equal to that of a rail road to Panama. Seeing, therefore, that the business men of this country are ready to set up millions against the saving of an hour in time day after day, what will they not do when days and weeks are thrown into the scale? Complete the Panama link and extend the line from the Mississippi river to California and the time is not distant when that Valley will teem with a population enjoying the blessings of freedom, wealth and prosperity to an extent that has never been witnessed by the eye of man.

The effect of a rail road communication with Panama, would, therefore, in my opinion, be to unite the two oceans by ship canal. With the rail road, the world would see the amount of commerce, seeking portage here. The rail road would soon be found insufficient to transport it and a ship canal would be the result. Thus I regard the proposed rail road, somewhat in the light of a demonstration which the world requires first to be made, in order to give practical proof as to the necessity and benefits of a ship canal.

Respectfully, &c.

M. F. MAURY.

HON. S. BORLAND,
U. S. Senate Chamber.

A POEM ON THE ISTHMUS LINE.

A pretty, little, gilt-edged book of poems lies before us, in which the Isthmus Connection is discussed in verse. The book was printed, we believe, for private circulation, but we propose to give the stanzas to our readers as a specimen of high lyric fervor, and as an appropriate companion to Lieut. Maury's letter.

The reader will naturally ask, "who is the poet?" We answer, the distinguished Professor Francis Lieber, the friend of Niebuhr, the editor of the Encyclopedia Americana, the recently conspicuous figure on the floor of the German Parliament, and now acting President of the College of South Carolina.—*Ed. Mess.*

THE SHIP CANAL

FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE PACIFIC.

An Ode to the American People and their Congress, on reading the Message of the United States President in December, 1847.

Rend America asunder
And unite the Binding Sea
That emboldens Man and tempers—
Make the ocean free.

Break the bolt which bars the passage,
That our River richly pours
Western wealth to western nations;
Let that sea be ours—

Ours by all the hardy whalers,
By the pointing Oregon,
By the west impelled and working
Unthralled Saxon son.

Long indeed they have been wooing,
The Pacific and his bride;
Now 'tis time for holy wedding—
Join them by the tide.

Have the snowy surfs not struggled
Many centuries in vain,
That their lips might seal the union?
Lock then Main to Main.

When the mighty God of nature
Made his favored continent,
He allowed it yet unsevered,
That a race be sent,

Able, mindful of his purpose,
Prone to people, to subdue,
And to bind the lands with iron,
Or to force them through.

What the prophet-navigator,
Seeking straits to his Catais,*
But began, now consummate it—
Make the strait and pass.

Blessed eyes, that shall behold it,
When the pointing boom shall veer,
Leading through the parted Andes,
While the nations cheer!

There at Suez, Europe's mattock
Cuts the briny road with skill,
And must Darien bid defiance
To the pilot still?

Do we breathe this breath of knowledge
Purely to enjoy its zest?
Shall the iron arm of science
Like a sluggard rest?

Up then, at it! earnest People!
Bravely wrought thy scorning blade,
But there's fresher fame in store yet,
Glory for the spade.

What we want is naught in envy,
But for all we pioneer;
Let the keels of every nation
Through the isthmus steer.

Must the globe be always girded
Ere we get to Bramah's priest?
Take the tissues of your Lowells
Westward to the East.

Ye, that vanquish pain and distance,
Ye, enmeshing Time with wire,

* Catais or Cathay and Zipango were the names given to the eastern part of Asia, toward which the greatest of navigators directed his westerly voyage, as Marco Polo had reached it by an eastward journey. Columbus having found that a continent debarred him from continuing his westward course, persevered in searching for straits which would allow him a passage to his wished-for Catais.